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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT
ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 31 December 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the final communiqué of the 14th meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Damascus Declaration States, held in Cairo on 28 and 29 December 1996 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly under agenda items 30, 33, 35, 53, 67 and 151.

(Signed) Soliman AWAAD
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Final communiqué of the 14th meeting of the Damascus Declaration States held in Cairo on 28 and 29 December 1996

At the invitation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Damascus Declaration States held their fourteenth meeting in Cairo on 28 and 29 December 1996.

The session was presided over by His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and attended by the following:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Abdullah Al-Noaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Farouk al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr al-Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Mr. Abd al-Aziz Dakhil al-Dakhil, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also attended.

Inspired by the purposes and principles of the Damascus Declaration, and on the basis of the role played by member States in promoting Arab solidarity, advancing the interests of the Arab nation and safeguarding joint national security; in response to current requirements, and in the light of international and regional developments, particularly with regard to the peace process, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs affirmed their absolute commitment to work in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo from 21 to 23 June 1996. They also affirmed their commitment to the firm and principled positions adopted by Arab leaders at the Conference with a view to strengthening Arab solidarity and establishing a just and comprehensive peace that will serve the highest interests of the Arab nation, restore its usurped rights and monitor effective Arab action in the future.

The Ministers reaffirmed their countries' firm stance with regard to developments in the peace process, and the need to adhere to the authoritative bases on which it has been based since the Madrid Conference. Of particular relevance were: Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978); the principle of land for peace; complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 line; complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa to the internationally recognized boundaries; complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territory, including Arab Jerusalem, and the guarantee of legitimate national rights for the Palestinian people, including the right of self-determination and to establish an independent State on its own national soil. The Ministers affirmed their absolute support for the Palestinians' position, their efforts to effect Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian land, and safeguard security and the rights of their people.

The Ministers affirmed that the attempt by the Israeli Government to renege on its commitment to withdraw completely from the Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 line, which had been made before the American co-sponsor, represented Israeli withdrawal from the peace process, undermining its bases and authority.

The Ministers expressed their complete support for Syria's firm stance regarding the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace based on legitimate international foundations, the principle of land for peace, and the resumption of negotiations from the point which had been reached. They affirmed their support for Lebanon and Syria, faced with Israeli provocation and threats intended to establish the occupation and impose the status quo on the Arabs. They held the Israeli Government fully responsible for the resultant dangerous consequences.

The Ministers stressed the importance of resuming negotiations and making rapid progress on all Arab-Israeli tracks, building on the progress and results that had been achieved. They similarly affirmed the need for Israel to abide by all the commitments that it had made as part of the peace process.

The Ministers referred to the wide international support for the Arab claim, and commended the positive development in the role of Europe, reflected in the statements issued by the European Union. In this context, the Ministers expressed their especial appreciation of the role of France, under President Jacques Chirac. They also expressed their appreciation of the statements made by the President of the United States of America, William Clinton, regarding Israeli settlement policy, and requested the United States to ensure that American financial aid was not used to implement that policy. They further requested the United States, in its capacity as a co-sponsor of the peace process, to adopt a stance that would ensure that the policy of expanding Israeli settlements on occupied Arab land would cease, and that the peace process would return to its proper course.

The Ministers affirmed their commitment to legitimate international resolutions requiring the non-recognition of any situation resulting from Israeli settlement activity, and declared that the establishment of settlements and the introduction of settlers were illegitimate acts that constituted a

violation of the Geneva Conventions and the Madrid framework, in addition to threatening to bring about the collapse of the peace process.

The Ministers reaffirmed the declaration made by the most recent Arab Summit Conference, namely, that Israeli Government insistence on its position could lead to the destruction of the peace process. This would have dangerous consequences, might return the region to a vortex of violence, and force a number of Arab States to begin to reconsider the steps taken vis-à-vis Israel in the framework of that peace process. The Israeli Government alone would bear the entire responsibility for such a situation.

The Ministers asserted that the establishment of truly cooperative relations between regional parties in the Middle East was subject to complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land, and the achievement by the Palestinian people of their legitimate national rights, in order that a climate of peace, security and stability could prevail in the region.

The Ministers stressed that a just and comprehensive peace would bring about balanced and equal security for all the States of the region. In this respect, the security of Israel could not be considered a prerogative to which it was entitled at the expense of the security of Arab countries. Equal security was the basis of the stability and continuity of peace. In this context, the Ministers stressed the importance of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and acceptance of a system of safeguards which would be supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Ministers stressed Iraq's absolute obligation to implement Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait, take measures to guarantee the release of all Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees, return property, abide by the compensation mechanism, and cooperate fully with the efforts of the United Nations Special Commission, entrusted with the task of eliminating Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. It must also comply with Security Council resolution 949 (1994), and refrain from any provocative or hostile action that threatens the State of Kuwait and the countries of the region.

The Ministers expressed their profound sympathy for the suffering of the Iraqi people, for which the Iraqi Government bore the entire responsibility, and welcomed the beginning of the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) as a positive step towards the alleviation of that suffering. The Ministers called upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the United Nations in order to ensure safe and scrupulous implementation of that resolution. They renewed their full commitment to the unity of Iraq, and in this context, referred to recent events in the north of the country. They affirmed their opposition to any policies or measures intended to threaten the territorial integrity of Iraq and to any intervention in its internal affairs.

The Ministers reviewed with great concern developments in respect of the Iranian occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. They expressed their profound

regret that the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to fail to respond to repeated, sincere and honest calls from the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Damascus Declaration States, the Council of the League of Arab States and the Arab Summit Conference to find a peaceful resolution to this conflict. The Ministers condemned successive Iranian measures on the islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and expressed their continuing concern with regard to the results of the Iranian Government's extremism in pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force on the three islands, in violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates and its rights on the islands, exposing security and stability in this region to risk, and negating the principles and precepts of international law, the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the principles of good-neighbourliness, respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the States of the region.

The Ministers reaffirmed the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and their absolute support for any peaceful measures it might take with a view to regaining that sovereignty. They reiterated their call to the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the three islands, desist from pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force, halt the building of Iranian installations on the three islands with the aim of altering their demographic composition, remove all installations and repeal all unilateral measures previously implemented in the islands. They called upon Iran to adopt peaceful means in order to end the dispute over the islands, in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, and to agree to submit the issue to the International Court of Justice.

The Ministers stressed that the security of the United Arab Emirates was inseparable from the security of the Arab States of the Gulf and Arab national security. They expressed their grave concern over the deployment by the Islamic Republic of Iran of ground-to-ground missiles in the Arab Gulf, including on the three occupied islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, thereby directly threatening the States and installations of the Gulf Cooperation Council. They requested the Iranian Government to desist from any action that might threaten the security and stability of the Arab Gulf region.

The Ministers affirmed the importance of making positive progress in the relations between Syria and Turkey, on the basis of respect for established Arab rights in the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and in order to promote the establishment of cooperative relations and good-neighbourliness between the two countries and strengthen joint Arab-Turkish interests. They expressed the hope that the Turkish Government would reconsider its military and security agreements with Israel, which threatened the security of Arab States.

The Ministers strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, and whatever its source or impetus. They noted the importance of solid cooperation between the Damascus Declaration States in confronting manifestations of extremism and violence, as such manifestations threatened stability and development, and conflicted with the essence of Islam, tolerance. They condemned the terrorist acts carried out in Bahrain and in the city of Khobar in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which had killed, injured and terrorized peaceful and innocent people.

On the basis of the principle of the joint interests of the Damascus Declaration States, and the collective nature of their security, the Ministers reaffirmed their solidarity with any Declaration State that was subjected to terrorist acts, and called for the coordination of international efforts with a view to extirpating this problem. They observed that extremism, violence and terrorism were global problems that were not restricted to one people or region. It was important to make a distinction between legitimate national resistance to occupation and aggression and terrorist acts.

The Ministers agreed on the measures necessary to build a system for joint Arab action, as already decided at the twelfth session. They also agreed on a number of measures concerning the participation of their States in the strengthening of joint Arab action, including the completion of the drafting and adoption of the protocol provided for in part II, paragraph 1(a), of the Damascus Declaration, with a view to submitting it to the League of Arab States.

The Ministers of the Damascus Declaration States expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the kindness and hospitality with which they had been received, and commended the efficient arrangements that had contributed to the success of the meeting. They wished the Arab Republic of Egypt further progress and prosperity under the leadership of His Excellency President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak and his excellent Government.

The Ministers agreed to hold their next meeting in the Syrian Arab Republic in June 1997.